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Department of State

INCOMING
TELEGRAM *RC*

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ACTION HA-05

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SAO PA 02558 291133Z

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
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O R 282040Z AUG 73
FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0781
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY LISBON

~~SECRET~~ SAO PAULO 2558

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUN, PINT, CARR (TENZER, ESTHER), BR
SUBJ: ARREST OF BRAZILIAN STUDENTS

REF: A. SAO PAULO 2531 (NOTAL) B. SAO PAULO 2535 (NOTAL),
C. STATE 216952 (NOTAL)

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1. SAO PAULO STATE POLITICAL POLICE (DEOPS) ANNOUNCED LATE AUGUST 24 THAT 22 PERSONS WERE ARRESTED ON AUGUST 22 FOR VIOLATION OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY ACT. THE 22, MOSTLY STUDENTS, WERE ACCUSED OF BELONGING TO THE WORKERS LEAGUE (LIGA OPERARIA), WHICH IS CONSIDERED BY GOB A CLANDESTINE, SUBVERSIVE ORGANIZATION. THE GROUP INCLUDED ESTHER TENZER (U.S. CITIZEN, SUBJECT OF REF A), HUGO MIGUEL BRESSATO AND RITA LUZIA ESTRASBERG (ARGENTINE CITIZENS), AND ANTONIO MARIA SA LEAL (PORTUGUESE). TENZER AND SA LEAL WERE RELEASED AUGUST 25 WITHOUT CHARGES (REF B).

2. POLICE ISSUE STATEMENT: POLICE SPOKESMAN MADE LENGTHY STATEMENT AUGUST 25 JUSTIFYING ARRESTS. POLICE STATED THAT ACTION WAS DIRECTED ONLY AGAINST LEADERS OF THE WORKERS SOCIALIST PARTY (PARTIDO SOCIALISTA DOS TRABALHADORES -- PST), FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE WORKERS LEAGUE (LIGA OPERARIA). POLICE CLAIM THAT UNTIL EARLY 1978 PST WAS SUBORDINATE TO ORGANIZATION KNOWN AS BOLSHEVIK TENDENCY (TENDENCIA BOLCHEVIQUE -- TB), A GROUP IDENTIFIED WITH THE TROSKYTE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. TB IS SUPPOSEDLY DIRECTED BY ARGENTINE HUGO MIGUEL BRESSATO WHO IS FOUNDER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (PRT) AND OF THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (ERP) IN ARGENTINA. TB WAS ALLEGED BY POLICE TO BE COORDINATING ACTIVITIES OF THE PST IN ARGENTINA, THE "SOCIALIST BLOC" IN COLOMBIA AND THE PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO DOS TRABALHADORES IN PORTUGAL. POLICE ALLEGED THAT BRAZILIAN PST IS ATTEMPTING TO ORGANIZE A SOCIALIST PARTY IN BRAZIL BY MEANS OF THE MOVEMENT OF SOCIALIST CONVERGENCE (MOVIMENTO DE CONVERGENCIA SOCIALISTA) A FRONT ORGANIZATION OF THE PST WHICH WAS LAUNCHED IN JANUARY 1978. POLICE CLAIM DOCUMENTS FOUND ON LEADERS OF PST CONFIRM THAT THE ORGANIZATION SOCIALIST CONVERGENCE HAS THE OBJECTIVE OF OBTAINING LEGALIZATION FOR A SOCIALIST PARTY AND GRADUALLY TRANSFERRING THE PST STRUCTURE TO THE LEGALIZED PS.

3. ARRESTS PROTESTED: DETENTION OF THE 22 PERSONS WAS DENOUNCED IN BRASILIA BY BRAZILIAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MDB) DEPUTIES ISRAEL DIAS NOVAES AND AIRTON SOARES. SAO PAULO MDB STATE DEPUTY ALBERTO GOLDMAN ALSO PROTESTED THE ARRESTS AS PROOF THAT THE PROMISED "OPENING" OF THE GEISEL GOVERNMENT IS A FRAUD. OTHER PROTESTS WERE REGISTERED BY MDB CITY COUNCILMEN AND METALLURGICAL AND JOURNALIST UNION OFFICIAL IN SAO PAULO.

4. PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS: STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN SAO PAULO AUGUST 25 PROTESTING THE ARRESTS WERE QUICKLY DISPERSED BY POLICE. SOME TEAR GAS WAS USED. PEACEFUL MARCH BY PERHAPS ONE THOUSAND PERSONS, MOSTLY STUDENTS, LATER BROKE INTO SMALLER DEMONSTRATIONS

CONSISTING OF GROUPS OF SEVERAL HUNDRED CONVENING IN DOWNTOWN PLAZAS AND CHANTING SLOGANS OF PROTEST UNTIL DISPERSED, WHEREUPON THEY WOULD RECONVENE IN ANOTHER AREA AND COMMENCE CHANTING AGAIN. CONSULAR OFFICER WHO OBSERVED SOME OF THESE ACTIVITIES FOUND ATMOSPHERE MORE ONE OF STUDENTS AND POLICE FEELING EACH OTHER OUT AT A DISTANCE RATHER THAN ONE OF HIGH TENSION WITH DANGER OF IMMINENT VIOLENT CONFRONTATION. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT 19 GROUPS SUPPORTING THE SOCIALIST CONVERGENCE WILL DEMONSTRATE IN FRONT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN RIO DE JANEIRO ON AUGUST 29.

5. COMMENT: CONSULATE FIRST ADVISED OF DETENTIONS LATE AUGUST 24 BY MDB DEPUTY GOLDMAN. NEITHER THE PST NOR THE SOCIALIST CONVERGENCE HAS REPRESENTED A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM FOR THE BRAZILIAN AUTHORITIES TO DATE AND IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY THE POLICE WOULD ADOPT A HARD LINE TOWARD THESE RELATIVELY INSIGNIFICANT GROUPS AT THIS TIME.

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6. BEGIN ~~TOP~~ FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS IN SAO PAULO AUGUST 27, PROTESTING THE COST OF LIVING, ARE REPORTED SEPARATELY. POVENHIRE

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